

Good afternoon everybody. I'm sorry to not be able to deliver this speech to you, I have had some issues with my visa application. My Turkish residence permit is expiring soon and even though I applied to renew it, it takes some time for them to produce the card, which made UK immigration think it's unsafe to give me a visa.

I hope everyone will have a great time today. I am there with you in spirit.

If you would like to personally contact me, please ask for my e-mail address from the organisers.

I would like to thank the organisers so much for their invitation and immense support throughout the process of trying to get to the event. They are truly amazing.

Five years ago, I only thought of peace as this feeling I have when I'm in nature, or eating chocolate when reading a book. I still do! But I never considered it very seriously, even though I lived in Libya, a country that was dangerous for those who oppose or want change.

It feels surreal now, how peace became this essential nagging need the moment life as I knew it collapsed, for example when my baby brother would come to sleep next to me because he was afraid of the bombing.

I think many people in the world today, even those who are living in less peaceful places, think of peace as the image of peace signs along with hippies. Even those who desperately need and want peace often think of a violent resolution for their despair, because simply asking for peace is not serious.

How come, you might ask? Because we all come from violent cultures, societies that glorify men fighting and sacrificing their lives to be martyrs, heroes and enemies.

All the countries and systems operate through securities, barriers, prisons, punishments and nationalism. But I think it's also because we were

never properly equipped to respond to conflicts, even on the micro level.

We are incompetent in handling violent conflicts non-violently.

Peace to those who live in relatively peaceful countries, or what I call “the power states” is the lack of wars or armed conflicts; this is the definition of negative peace.

In the societies of power states, there are various forms of systematic and cultural violence and oppression of various segments of the communities – there are various forms of injustices and wide gaps between genders and social classes.

A positive peace only operates when these oppressive violent forms disappear, and there’s more of an egalitarian system where all forms of life can live in harmony.

I believe in the Buddhism philosophy – if one form of life is unbalanced anywhere in the world, the whole system is askew.

I had to change my views and take peace seriously through traumatic painful experiences – But I believe this doesn’t have to be the case.

I believe if we work hard in providing imperial evidence in the benefit of peace, then more people will demand it.

However, as I had to first realise its importance within me, so does the world.

We have to find it within ourselves first, in our relationships and in our daily lives. Peace needs to be maintained on a daily basis, and remembered when faced with a challenge or when witnessing injustices.

We should embody peace and not in a perfect “unrealistic sense” but with all of our flaws and human limitations.

I maintain constant practice of non-violent communications (I still make mistakes, I am human), and I always place myself in other people's positions.

I now think of the differences among human beings as part of our existence, to be acknowledged and celebrated.

I work in various projects dealing with feminist issues, peace-building, non-violent campaigns and indigenous people's rights.

I also research constantly about more adequate ways to handle conflicts.

But most importantly I support friends and colleagues all the time in their work for various other causes.

I believe strongly in establishing an infrastructure for peace in all layers of our lives.

I link peace to every area in life and I think of every field that works towards elevating human injustices as peace work.

Peace, like all other forms of life, is in plural form, so as we are all connected in our issues, our grievances and our wishes and hopes, so should we in peace.

Once we start thinking of acting towards it instead of reacting to it, we will achieve more harmony in our world.

Thank you for today, for being you and for acting for peace, may it prevail in every corner of our universe.

Can I pose a question for you to mull over in the workshop - which happens after Mhairi Black's speech...

In what ways could you encourage and act on bringing more peace into your every day life?